Epidemiologist says the CDC's flu shot numbers rest on a flawed study design

10/09/2026 // Cassie B. // **550** Views

Tags: . vaccines, badhealth, badmedicine, badscience, biased, big government, Big Pharma, CDC, Dangerous Medicine, fake science, flu shot, Flu vaccine, influenza, pharmaceutical fraud, rational, research, rigged, science deception, science fraud, truth, vaccine wars

- Dr. Eyal Shahar, an epidemiology professor emeritus at the *University of Arizona*, says flu vaccine estimates from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) cannot be trusted.

- He argues the CDC's test-negative study design is biased because it only includes people who sought care and got tested.

- Jay Bhattacharya, director of the National Institutes of Health, delayed a CDC COVID-19 vaccine study over the same design concern.

- A Cleveland Clinic preprint found vaccinated employees had a 27% higher flu risk in an early version.

- Shahar also says excluding early post-vaccination infections can inflate vaccine effectiveness estimates.

For years, Americans have relied on federal estimates of how well the annual flu shot works. But an epidemiologist now argues those numbers are fundamentally untrustworthy, pointing to what he calls an inherent bias in the research method the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has long relied upon. Dr. Eyal Shahar, a professor emeritus at the *University of Arizona*'s Mel & Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health, contends that the CDC's favored study design produces biased and incoherent results.

How the test-negative design can skew results

Shahar's central complaint is the "test-negative design," a method the CDC has used for years to calculate vaccine effectiveness. The approach looks only at patients who visited a doctor with flu-like symptoms and got a flu test, then compares how many in the positive and negative groups had been vaccinated.

The problem, Shahar explained to *The Defender*, is that this approach excludes everyone who did not seek medical care or receive a test. That creates selection bias. More troubling, it can also introduce "collider bias," a statistical distortion that can skew results.

"There are many supporters of the test-negative design, and the CDC simply adopted that design long ago," Shahar said. "There are CDC-associated networks, all of which exclusively use that design to estimate effectiveness. It is time for a change."

Shahar, the author of nearly 200 papers and two books, including an epidemiology and statistics textbook, argues that a well-designed cohort study tracking both symptomatic and asymptomatic flu cases would yield more accurate data. But such studies require more funding and effort.

NIH director delayed a CDC study over the same flaw

Shahar is not the only one raising concerns. Jay Bhattacharya, director of the National Institutes of Health, who served as acting CDC director this year, has voiced similar skepticism about the test-negative approach.

Earlier this year, Bhattacharya delayed publication of a COVID-19 vaccine study in the CDC's Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report because it relied on the test-negative design. The journal later rejected it. Bhattacharya defended the decision on X, saying the design is statistically flawed and that no one "should view the paper as providing an accurate measure of vaccine efficacy."

Cleveland Clinic preprint found higher flu risk among vaccinated workers

A Cleveland Clinic cohort study posted last year as a preprint found vaccinated employees had a 27% higher risk of flu in the 2024-25 season, according to an early version of the paper. An author has said the findings do not justify pulling the vaccine from the market. The authors listed avoiding the test-negative design as a strength, writing that such studies "systematically overestimate true vaccine effectiveness."

Brian Hooker, chief scientific officer at Children's Health Defense, told *The Defender* that the flu shot has never really prevented transmission and that its efficacy against flu was negative in some years, including last year. "Flu would blow through a vaccinated population with nearly the same ease as it would an unvaccinated population," he said.

Excluding early infections can inflate effectiveness, Shahar says

Shahar's analysis of a 2022-2023 study from a CDC-associated network revealed another flaw: "immortal time bias." The study excluded patients who were vaccinated fewer than 14 days before their test or visit. Shahar says removing those early infections, which occur before the body builds immunity, can inflate the vaccine's apparent effectiveness.

Yale epidemiologist Dr. Harvey Risch added that the problem extends deeper, arguing that infections in the first two weeks after a shot should count as a possible harm, not be discarded. "If vaccines cause harm, accounting for that risk starts immediately upon vaccination," Risch told the *Epoch Times*.

Shahar has shared with *The Defender* a preprint on a newly described bias in the test-negative design. "I can't get it published," he said. He maintains that the CDC employs epidemiologists who know of better methods but keeps using a bias-prone design. Americans deciding each fall whether to roll up a sleeve deserve to know how solid the numbers behind that advice really are.

Sources for this article include:

ChildrensHealthDefense.org

ZeroHedge.com

TheEpochTimes.com

ASK BRIGHTANSWERS.AI

Ask our BrightAnswers.ai engine anything about this article or its topics Submit

Powered by BrightAnswers.ai Check out our prompting guide and video tutorials today.

RELATED TOPICS

. VACCINES | BADHEALTH | BADMEDICINE | BADSCIENCE | BIASED | BIG GOVERNMENT | BIG PHARMA | CDC | DANGEROUS MEDICINE | FAKE SCIENCE | FLU SHOT | FLU VACCINE | INFLUENZA | PHARMACEUTICAL FRAUD | RATIONAL | RESEARCH | RIGGED | SCIENCE DECEPTION | SCIENCE FRAUD | TRUTH | VACCINE WARS

Here's how you make delicious and nutritious
Tigernut Ginger Bread Cookies
with step by step video instructions!
LEARN MORE

LATEST NEWS

10/09/2026 / By Chase Codewell

Researchers Develop AI “Mind-Reading” Tool That Reconstructs What Eyes See

10/09/2026 / By Sterling Ashworth

After the Penny, Congress Looks to Tackle the Cost of the Nickel

10/09/2026 / By Chase Codewell

India’s Central Bank Raises Repo Rate to 5.50%, First Increase Since 2023

10/09/2026 / By Willow Tohi

Beyond the egg: Superior food sources of vitamin D for modern diets

10/09/2026 / By Jacob Thomas

Vast deep-sea life discovered under the Pacific as extraction tests leave lasting scars

10/09/2026 / By Cassie B.

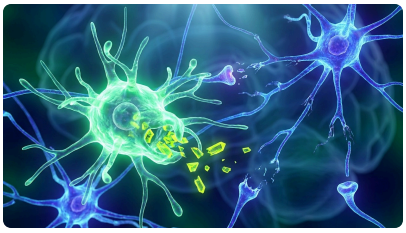
Federal judge tosses Michigan’s antitrust suit accusing Big Oil of blocking green energy

ORGANIC BANANA PEANUT BUTTER & CHOCOLATE
Instant Superfood Shake Delivers Clean Nutrition You Can Trust
SHOP NOW
USDA ORGANIC

RELATED NEWS

10/09/2026 / By Zoey Sky

25-Year Study Associates Regular Flossing With Lower Stroke and Atrial Fibrillation Risk



10/09/2026 / By Coco Somers

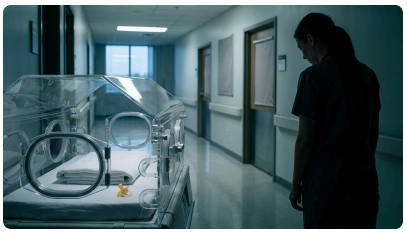
Neonicotinoid Pesticide Linked To Brain Damage In Study, Spotlights a Mechanism Ignored by Regulators

10/09/2026 / By Zoey Sky

Build a Healthy Plate Instead: Report Lists Six Foods That May Increase Cancer Risk

10/08/2026 / By Willow Tohi

U.S. children are exposed to hundreds of different pesticides, study reveals widespread contamination



10/08/2026 / By Morgan S. Verity

Nurse Alleges Stillbirth Surge at Fresno Hospital After COVID-19 Vaccine Rollout

10/08/2026 / By Zoey Sky

Time to Quit: WHO Says No Level of Alcohol Consumption Is Safe

TAKE ACTION:

Support Natural News by linking to this article from your website.

Permalink to this article:

https://www.naturalnews.com/2026-10-09-epidemiologist-cdc-flu-shot-numbers-flawed-study.html Copy

Embed article link:

<a href="https://www.naturalnews.com/2026-10-09-epidemiologist-cdc-flu-shot-numbers-flawed-study.html">Epide Copy

Reprinting this article:

Non-commercial use is permitted with credit to NaturalNews.com (including a clickable link).
Please contact us for more information.

FREE EMAIL ALERTS

Get independent news alerts on natural cures, food lab tests, cannabis medicine, science, robotics, drones, privacy and more.

Enter Your Email Address

We respect your privacy

This site is part of the Natural News Network © 2022 All Rights Reserved. Privacy | Terms All content posted on this site is commentary or opinion and is protected under Free Speech. Truth Publishing International, LTD. is not responsible for content written by contributing authors. The information on this site is provided for educational and entertainment purposes only. It is not intended as a substitute for professional advice of any kind. Truth Publishing assumes no responsibility for the use or misuse of this material. Your use of this website indicates your agreement to these terms and those published here. All trademarks, registered trademarks and servicemarks mentioned on this site are the property of their respective owners.